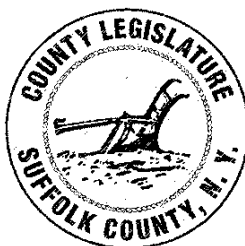


## SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

### Steve Stern

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR  
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT  
1842 E. Jericho Turnpike, Suite P  
HUNTINGTON, NY 11743



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Amanda Lindner  
LEGISLATIVE AIDE  
OFFICE: 631-854-5100  
Amanda.Lindner@suffolkcountyny.gov

### LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS 'KEY OF EXCELLENCE'

Recognized for "Housing Our Homeless Heroes Act" legislation to end veterans' homelessness



*Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern presented with the 'Key of Excellence' award from Long Island Coalition for the Homeless during the nonprofit's 27th Annual Keys for the Homeless Conference at Touro Law Center. From l to r: Greta Guarton, Executive Director of Long Island Coalition for the Homeless; Legislator Steve Stern, 16th L.D.; Patricia Salkin, Dean and Professor of Law at Touro Law Center; Valerie Chamberlain, Executive Board of Directors of Long Island Coalition for the Homeless.*

HUNTINGTON, NY – Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington, 16th L.D.), Chairman of the Veterans and Seniors Committee, was awarded the prestigious "Key of Excellence" from Long Island Coalition for the Homeless during its 27th Annual Keys for the Homeless Conference at Touro Law Center Friday, November 13, 2015.

According to the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, the Key of Excellence Award is given to leaders in the Long Island community whose contributions have significantly impacted the lives of Long Islanders in need. Awardees are recognized for their contributions and actions that have made lasting, positive change and improved the lives of homeless and/or at risk Long Islanders, as well as the general Long Island community.

Legislator Stern was recognized for his "Housing Our Homeless Heroes Act" legislation to end veterans' homelessness in Suffolk County. The Act is a package of four legislative initiatives that creates affordable housing for veterans by transferring tax-defaulted, blighted properties to nonprofit organizations for

rehabilitation and use as supportive veterans housing. The Act also enhances access to social services for our veterans, creates an information portal for former service members in need and criminalizes housing discrimination against veterans.

Suffolk County unanimously passed legislation this summer to approve the transfer of the first eight homes to be included in the “Housing Our Homeless Heroes Act.” Legislator Stern’s Act is also the model for federal legislation recently announced by co-sponsors Rep. Steve Israel (D, NY-3) and Rep. Tom Rooney (R, FL-17), which if passed, would turn dilapidated zombie properties over to non-profits for renovation and utilization for veterans housing nationally.

Legislator Stern spoke before more than 350 advocates working to combat homelessness on Long Island during the conference.

“It is an honor to receive the Key of Excellence Award and I am so proud to work alongside such outstanding organizations to assist our veterans and our most vulnerable neighbors,” Legislator Stern said. “When a soldier goes off to protect the ground we stand on, it is unacceptable that he or she should have to come home to sleep on it. As we all know, a home is much more than four walls and a roof. It is a sign of security, a mark of hope and a symbol of dignity that our veterans deserve.”

“Legislator Stern has changed the landscape in Suffolk County, creating a way for local government and non-profits to work together to create permanent, affordable, supportive housing for our homeless veterans,” Greta Guarton, Executive Director for Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, said. “It was our honor to present him with the Key of Excellence Award.”